

# SUCCESS

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Newsletter for Lake County Workforce Development

Spring 2014

Lake County Workforce Development offers a variety of job search services and training opportunities to help Lake County job seekers of all ages and at all levels of experience gain the necessary skills to be competitive in today's job market.

Team members work closely with businesses and community partners to make successful employment connections.

## New Skills Lead to New Jobs



In October 2013, Melissa joined the Workforce Volunteer group and began helping in the computer lab at the Job Center of Lake County. *"I found a whole new support network when I started helping other jobseekers."*

**Melissa** will graduate with a Masters Degree in Education/ Corporate Training in July 2014 thanks to funding through the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA). She was laid off in 2011 after more than a decade working for a pharmaceutical company. Melissa says that the hardest part about being unemployed for two years was the loss of purpose. She found the job market was profoundly different than when she had previously looked for work. *"I knew updating my education would open doors."*

A door opened for her in February 2014 when she was hired as a Document Control Coordinator for another pharmaceutical company. She thanks the team at Workforce Development for helping her with her resume and connecting her with job fairs and potential hiring opportunities.

Melissa's family went into debt to pay monthly bills while she was out of work. She is thrilled that she can now pay off her credit cards, but this new job wasn't about money. *"I was determined to get an interview because this job fit me perfectly."*

When **Valdislav** walked in to the Job Center in February 2014 to announce that he had a job, the room erupted in cheers. He had been attending Open Lab sessions at the Job Center for 1½ years. He had no computer experience when he first came in. Staff members helped him to create an email address, write and save a resume, and apply for jobs online. Vladislav was amazed at how complicated online applications were. Still, he kept coming back to the Job Center week after week. In March 2014, Vladislav started his new job as a food service worker in a cafeteria at the naval base.



## Ask the WIB

All Lake County Workforce Development programs operate under the oversight and strategic guidance of the Lake County Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Recently, we asked WIB member Andrew Warrington to tell us more about careers in the manufacturing industry and his experience on the WIB.

*Q: The manufacturing industry is getting a lot of buzz lately. What do you want job seekers to know about the field that they might not know?*

**A:** The truth is that the manufacturing industry has come a long way from Henry Ford and the early assembly line. Jobs in modern manufacturing look nothing like the days when workers did tedious, repetitive, mindless tasks for hours on end on a gritty shop floor. These days manufacturing companies have to be innovative and flexible, and so do our workers. We're definitely looking for team members who have basic skills, but also for people who understand that their job is also to solve problems, identify ways to improve, and collaborate to make things happen. We want people who bring their hands *and* their brains to work—at every level of the organization and in every role. This kind of culture and energy are what is driving the next generation of American manufacturing, and there are real opportunities for people who have that kind of attitude.

*Q: Speaking of opportunity, what makes manufacturing so exciting?*

**A:** The career path is one of the things that makes the manufacturing industry most exciting. This is one of the few sectors in our economy with relatively low barriers to entry—most jobs require some credentials, but not a college degree—where you can earn really great wages, usually with benefits. In fact many employers in the field will also pay for tuition reimbursement. For example, someone can start out with basic CNC credentials from a 4 month training program, and from there they can earn a decent living while adding new credentials and moving up the pay scale. Because the current manufacturing workforce is aging and looking to retire soon, not only will there be lots of opportunities, but employers are very motivated to help support workers that are looking to increase their skills and advance.

*Q: You recently relocated to Lake County from Indianapolis, where you also sat on the local WIB. Why are you interested in workforce development and participating in the WIB?*

**A:** First off, the WIB is a great way to give back to the community, but it's also a fantastic place to make business connections. The other people involved in workforce development are all focused on the same issues I am—job training, hiring the best people, growing our business—and we give each other ideas and explore the services available through the Workforce Development Department. Plus, after my very first WIB meeting in Lake County, I'm already working with two other WIB members on business deals.

*For more information about the WIB, contact Gary Gibson at [ggibson@lakecountyil.gov](mailto:ggibson@lakecountyil.gov) or 847.377.2234.*



*Andrew Warrington is the President and Chief Operating Officer of United Conveyor Corporation in Waukegan, Illinois. UCC employs over 400 talented people and manufactures environmental control systems for power plants and has been a respected name in the power business for 94 years. Andrew became President of UCC in 2013. Prior to that, for 15 years, he was with a manufacturing company in Indianapolis, Indiana finishing with 4 years as its President. He served as the Chairman of the board of Employ Indy, the Workforce Investment Board for Indianapolis. He has a bachelors and PhD degrees in Manufacturing Engineering from Leeds Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom.*

[www.unitedconveyor.com](http://www.unitedconveyor.com)

## Work Experience: Connecting with Employers

Lake County Workforce Development offers quality training to unemployed individuals under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The new work experience initiative now allows trainees to complete three months of paid work experience with local employers. Members of the business service team from Workforce Development review the pool of current trainees and interview appropriate candidates. They process work experience agreements and administer drug and background checks.

Two trainees started their work experience at the Lake County Health Dept. in Dec. 2013 and Jan. 2014



**Yamilia** (above left) was a lawyer in Cuba and moved here two years ago. She took a 'survival job' as a line worker for 6 months but was laid off. She learned about the training programs offered through Workforce Development. She completed online training to become a Medical Human Resource Assistant in January 2014. *"It is really hard to look for work as an immigrant. This experience has helped me become more confident about what I can offer an employer."*

**Mary Harris-Reese** (above center), oversaw Yamilia and Carmelita as they assisted with preparations for an annual audit cycle at the Health Dept. She describes the work experience initiative as a **win-win** for everyone.

Mary says she has been amazed at the trainees' quick grasp of the audit project. The trainees, she explained, use an electronic health record system, develop reports, spreadsheets and tables and participate in conference calls.

**Carmelita** (above right) says her work experience has driven home the importance of documentation. *"There is so much to learn here."*

Carmelita had been a surgical technician almost two decades ago but most recently has worked in retail and life insurance sales. Ongoing family medical struggles and a job loss in 2012 reignited her passion for the medical field. She finished medical assistant training in January 2014 and will take the state exam soon.

*"This has been a great experience for me. I've gained as much as they have." Mary Harris-Reese*

## Work Experience: Connecting with Employers

When they heard about the work experience initiative, Lee Burton and Gary Barton (*pictured below, second and third from left*) with the Lake County IT (information technology) Department—asked themselves why they weren't taking advantage of the program. The Workforce Development Manager sent them resumes of Workforce trainees. Several candidates jumped out at them. *"I was surprised when I saw the resumes for Charles and Chris because they read exactly as we would post a job opening."* They were looking for someone who did not need training and who *"spoke the language."* They found that in these two candidates.



Chris (*pictured above left*) was laid off from an IT position that he held for 22 years with a global safety science company. He looked for work for almost year before connecting with Workforce Development. He decided that PMP (project management) certification would enhance his marketability. He completed Six Sigma Yellow Belt certification and was studying for the PMP exam when he was offered a work experience with the IT Department.

Chris was immediately assigned to several large projects involving transitioning to new products and setting up email archival procedures for approximately 2900 government employees. His supervisor notes that Chris uncovered some surprises when documenting IT procedures. *"It has been really helpful to have a new set of eyes on our situation."*

Charles (*pictured above right*) was only on the job for 15 minutes before he was sent out for field work. He delivered, set up, tested and returned early voting equipment. Presently, he sets up new computers for county employees and wipes old computers to be sent out for auction.

Charles was employed for 15 years as a Telecommunications Technician for a large media corporation when he was laid off. He was able to update his IT skills with the assistance of Workforce Development. He says the work experience opportunity at the county building has given him an opportunity to experience IT services with a large government organization. This work experience has helped him to build his confidence as he continues to look for his next job.



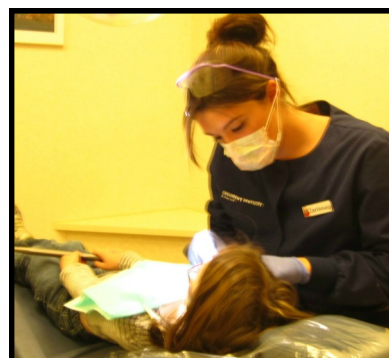
## Youth Training Programs

Lake County Workforce Development assists young people with training grants in post secondary education to start their careers. Read the stories of three individuals who are beginning their careers in transportation, healthcare and manufacturing.



**Tristan** participated in a Bridge-to-College program in 2013, culminating with a 3 month internship at Midas. He received a certificate as a Brakes and Suspension specialist and soon found work as a salesman for an automotive parts store. He is currently enrolled at the College of Lake County, completing his Associate degree as an Under the Car Technician.

**Clarissa** is thrilled to be working as a Dental Assistant at a pediatric dental office. She completed her GED and training in chair side assisting within 2 years. She says there is nothing better than having an education.



**Tyler** knew he wanted to get manufacturing training before he even completed high school, but he had to wait until he turned 18. He started an accelerated program in July 2013 and was hired as a CNC Operator immediately after completion. That's not typical for a new high school graduate. "I enjoy thinking of things in a technical way. Programming provides the foundation for all the machining processes."

Median wages in Illinois  
Automotive Technician: \$17  
Dental Assistant: \$15   CNC Machinist: \$20  
2012 data from [www.careerinfonet.org](http://www.careerinfonet.org)

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Workforce staff can help employers with their recruitment needs. Call 847.377.3450 and ask to speak with a member of the business service team.



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### On Site Recruitment for New Store

In February 2014, the Job Center of Lake County assisted a national retailer as it opened a new store in Lake County. Ross Stores was looking for a site where individuals could complete online applications and in-person interviews. The Job Center proved to be an ideal location. Job Center staff scheduled and assisted with marketing of the hiring event. Ross staff met and interviewed over 240 people at the Job Center within three days. The store opened its new Waukegan site in early 2014 on time and with the needed staff.

### Job Center Helped Him Get Back on Track

**Steve** was laid off from a long-time job as a Distribution Manager in 2007 and spent the next few years wrapping up family affairs while working a part-time job.

In 2012, Steve says he hit rock bottom when he was laid off again and lost his housing and car. He moved into Oxford House, a self-help recovery home in Waukegan. He heard that the Job Center of Lake County was nearby and walked in one day. He became a regular fixture at the center for several months.

Steve created multiple resumes at the Job Center and searched for job listings online at Illinois Job link. He attended every workshop that he could, including the Mature Worker Network. He even started bringing his housemates to the Center. In February 2014, Steve attended the Ross job fair at the Job Center. Several weeks later, he learned that he was hired.



Steve has introduced almost a dozen other jobseekers to the Job Center of Lake County.